

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is a transcription of a note folded inside a manuscript of the Pocket Guide to the Empire, Second Edition. The manuscript, commissioned by the Empress Morihatha in the fourteenth year of her reign, was infamously left unpublished due to the scandalous nature of its contents – a product, many would say, of the Imperial Geographic Society taking far too literally its assignment to “modernize the claim that [Tamri-el] was in fact a unified Empire” (the role of the Septims in suppressing this vital document cannot be overstated; it is but one of many pieces of evidence against the Empire burnt to ashes by the Dragon’s acrid breath). The note, along with the manuscript, was found in the bowels of a forbidden library of the Moth Chantry, hidden from sight between two massive tomes of indecipherable paleographemes. The discoverer was a confrater of the Temple installed in a convenient position as an agent provocateur. Upon recovering the texts he immediately channeled them to Temple Zero via high-priority glyphstream, as per Null Oath protocols. Unfortunately, contact with him was subsequently lost.

Yet even more unfortunate is a delay in the propagation of the Truth! While the Temple’s mnemographers were able to decrypt the abnegaurbic doctrines of the note, the Pocket Guide remains a puzzle to our scribes even as you read this. Certain complications that arose at the end of its transmission have made the transcription process difficult – in passages, it can be difficult to distinguish the original text from the sender’s hectic fever dreams. It is the work of the Empire’s sleepers, no doubt: their touch venomous, their tendrils crawling through every pocket of the dreamsleeve.

The note appears to be the minutes of a secret meeting of the Elder Council held in 3E331 in which the membership of the Geographic Society were convicted of treason and the Pocket Guide was suppressed by Council edict. How they fear the Truth, who came to Power by clawing it to tatters! But they failed, of course, for the lovers of the Truth are many; though we know not who spited the Dragon by saving it, they who preserved these texts have embodied the heart of our Manifesto (and, indeed, may have helped bring it about.) And now the Temple has found it appropriate to publish its contents, that all of Tamri-el might see the Truth with eyes unveiled – for it is in the Truth that we are free from the mythopoeic enslavement of Talos and his co-conspirators, free from all Opression!

**NU-MANTIA! FREEDOM! NU-MANTIA! FREEDOM! NU-MANTIA! FREEDOM!
NU-MANTIA! FREEDOM! NU-MANTIA! FREEDOM! NU-MANTIA! FREEDOM!**

Here you will find the foundation for your new Temple.
ECMB-MRA: mnemonic daedron-capacitance memospore classification xD15JMo0JfiX
cogitocode: a gnarled tibrol tree against the sunset, overlooking a lake; try to feel melancholy

"fk00-54bQ15"
ZERO-SUM VENTURE... RETURN FALSE... VERIFICATION 1
"f000-50bQ15"
FEXFEINT ENABLED... RETURN TRUE... VERIFICATION 8
"f000-000015"
WATERWORD WARD... RETURN TRUE... VERIFICATION 0
"0000-000000"
ACCESS GRANTED RELEASING MEMOSPORE
xxxx0001010101010101xxxx0111100101010111xx101010xxxx0101010100x0x0x00010x00x0x0
x01000x00x00x0x0x0x0x0x0x0x0x0010xxMINUTES

*of a meeting of the Most-Esteemed
ELDER COUNCIL,
forever lieges and loyal servants fraternal of Her Most Honored and Exalted the
EMPRESS SEPTIM MORIHATHA,
Chosen of White-Gold and the Amulet of Kings, Sovereign of the Ruby Throne, Lord of Cyrodiil and her
Dominions, etc., etc.,
Held
TWENTY-EIGHTH OF MID-YEAR
in the
THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST YEAR
of the Empire of Men,
transcribed and annotated by an adjunct of His Lordship the
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF WEYE-UPON-RUMARE,
Master of the Hamlet-Across-The-Way, Most-Esteemed Among Equals of the Minor Council, etc., etc.,
FOR THE EYES OF FELLOW-COUNCILORS ONLY*

We, in this year 331 of the 3rd Era of the Empire Cyrodiilic, on the 28th of Mid-Year, have appeared before the Lord and High Chancellor Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu, representing in voice and authority our Empress Morihatha, hegemon of Cyrod and Cyrod and all its lawful territories under the Ruby Red Throne as established by Tiber Imperator, with the goal of forming an Elder Council consisting of the following persons:

Here we will dream-swell on a very, very long list of councilors with their respective positions and titles, and absentees, and councilors attending via trance, spectral representation, etc., except the following persons (hear-see: now), as they shall already be mentioned in those other estimable lists found now in your pockets save for the naked here assembled, etc., and the as-agreed-upon-in-amulet those members and delegates and strangely-beautiful silk concerns as writ in the council definitions for the legislative year 331.

AND AS the aforementioned Elder Council having been called together by the Lord and High Chancellor Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu via priority dreamsleeve transmission and couriermoth, to take place outside of the regular calendar, though thereby not replacing the scheduled meeting on the 31st of Mid-Year AND UNDER the Corbolo Protocol of 3E 275, this council session is to be treated compliant with the standards of security class "E12 - ad hoc and highly classified" and, thusly, SHALL be held in secret. Access to the session or its transcription must be denied to any citizen with Imperial clearance level smaller than or equal to 23b, as decreed in Subsection 4-B of the Concealment Clause of the Council Accords vis-à-vis the Corbolo Protocol. Does any present Councilor object to the aforementioned procedural enumeration?

*****Elder Councilor Maganifly-Good One, Elder Councilor Ambassador Wood-Worth, and Elder Councilor Delphine IV have already presented their collected votes of "Nay." What say the others?

Elder Councilor Trails-his-Graves seeks to initiate a vote of "Nay" – let us now be interrupted by an unseen cascade resonance in the echo-stream of his dreamsleeve transmission. Very good.

Elder Councilor Maganifly-Good One, Elder Councilor Ambassador Wood-Worth, and Elder Councilor Delphine IV, along with Our Ceremonial Guard here-now named and/or title Afternoon Nap and an adjunct to Elder Councilor Ambassador Wood-Worth here-now named and/or titled for this time-being, Circumference Comfort, now may proceed to assist Elder Councilor Trails-his-Graves in re-establishing a stable link. Make it happen, people.

Ah, very good. Unfortunately we must laugh now, and in a great volume, DO IT, as Adjunct Circumference Comfort has received injuries amounting to a minor concussion and third-degree burns along his thigh and needs to be escorted out of the Council chambers. Goodbye with you, good sir.

Upon re-establishment of all links, a cloture vote shall be re-instated as per Sub-Protocol 343 of the Laws of Triangulation, wherein all members may present their votes.

There is a unanimous NAY. Good for all of us. Very, very good. The Empress will be and is already pleased yesterday. **Our Proceedings May Resume.*******

High Chancellor *Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu*: "All members of the Imperial Geographic Society that undertook the sacred act of the penmanship of the Second Pocket Guide via Imperial Command (in writing, no less): You are hereby given the right to defend your actions before the Elder Council."

Imperial Geographic Society Editor [NYMIX NOW ZERO'D]: "If I may, on behalf of – "

High Chancellor *Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu*: "Let it be known that the right to trial was conferred upon the defendants. How does this Council rule?"

Elder Council Collective: "Guilty."

High Chancellor *Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu*: "The matter of guilt having been settled, how does this Council move to sentence the defendants?"

Elder Council Collective: "Death, effective immediately."

High Chancellor *Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu*: "The Council has ruled. Guards?"

Hatta of The Sphinxmoth Inquiry Tree: "High Chancellor, ENOUGH! If I may first address to all assembled or in state *ad semblio*, I would request of the Council the reason that We have overlooked the need for an encoded Verification Return False for the Belharzaharm?"

Lord Jak Candlestick of the Western Wax, the Eastern Wax, the Southern Wax, but Not Yet of the Northern Wax: "Silence, Hatta! We are already in session. All here know your affinity for the son of the Aleshut (pauses for hymnals thirty and eight) but you have no right to–"

Hatta of The Sphinxmoth Inquiry Tree: "Acausal Interrupt! I will not allow these proceedings to be compromised by future scrying, nor to allow you to ignore silks uncounted since–"

Ghost Counsel Choir (Blade-Seneschal and above): "Peli-NULL. Hatta is dead. Move to formation of NU-Hatta post-assembly by his brethren blessed. 331 High Chancellor regains the floor."

High Chancellor *Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu*: "Thank you in the utmost of that ideal, Ghost Choir. No doubt, we are all in a moment of woe. Let me mourn for– all right, I'm done. I **shall now invoke the name of the Hasphat and most likely we will get sidetracked by talk of the Rim.**"



High Chancellor *Arboretumest-Best Ud-Maniphas Segu*: "HOLD! THE! CENTER! I have just been informed that Her Majesty has arrived in our heads. There we go! Ponder her! Now... where were we?"

A POCKET GUIDE
to
THE EMPIRE
and its environs

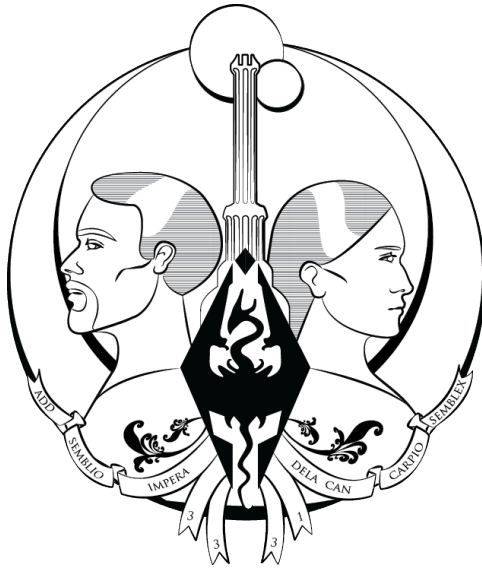
*Being a Description of the Lands
and the Chiefs Features of their Histories*



Dedicated

To the Chosen of White-Gold and the Amulet of Kings, Sovereign of the Ruby Throne, Lord of
Cyrodiil and her Dominions
Her Most Honored and Exalted the Empress Morihatha Septim

Promulgated under the Authority of the Imperial Geographical Society



Welcome, Citizen (Zero)!

The Wheel Metamundic: Serpents and the Rumors of Serpents

Kalpa Akaishicorprus

The Totemic Return: Skyrim

A Preamble

To properly understand Skyrim, which one must do if they are to take on the burden of describing it for the layman, its geographies, its histories, its peoples, and its myths must be perceived as an aggregate. The Northlanders and their environs are the most variegated simplicity on this earth, with their heroic narratives serving as a record of all events leading to the present day. Which is a long way of saying that the land and the legendry of Skyrim is of a cycle not quite recognizable as prudent to the rest of the Empire's Mannish kingdoms, since the Cyrodilic south prefers some coherence in their Fatherland's fancy and it will give them none. Perhaps in this way, the Sons and Daughters of Kyne are more akin to the mytho-genealothesophy of the modern Mer, but attempts to find common purchase in this matter is always met with the shaking, frostbitten beards of those that hold most dear the Nordic faith.

With that preamble sitting precariously on a precipice (an idea that the Nordic Greybeards study themselves with an almost reverent amusement), let us just say here that Nordic faith is complicated. It is decentralized by the inevitable embellishment and narrative entanglement of millennia of oral tradition. Most Nordic myths contradict each other, using anachronisms or elements co-opted from other cultures, or repeat themselves under different guises. Sometimes they do all of this, and purposefully so.

Indeed, the Nords freely admit their mythic haberdashery, and take great delight in mish-mashing their legends together (and the legends of others, even their historic enemies, the Aldmer and Orsimer) into "whatever just tells a good story at feast time." As their Clever Men are fond of saying, "The snows melt and then freeze again and in the end it is all still so much water. Legends are the same."

It is almost palpable here, the wondering anticipation of the reader how these ideas might apply also to (indeed be part and parcel of) the very ostensibly empirical observations of Skyrim's history and geography. There is no better rendition of this seminal through-line of the Nordic comprehension of this kalpa than their most famous tradition, the annual reckoning of the Thirteenth of Sun's Dawn Feast for the Dead, "The Five Hundred Mighty Companions or Thereabouts of Ysgramor the Returned", a song so delicately exquisite that the throats of every hallskald worthy of becoming hoarse in its telling proudly tells it at knife and mead point, relishing in the danger closeness of both.

The Five Hundred Mighty Companions or Thereabouts of Ysgramor the Returned

The first of Ysgramor's Five Hundred Mighty Companions was actually two, the ashen-amalgamation of his sons that had survived Sarthaal only to die in the freeze-rains of the returning, named Tsunaltir and Stuhnalmir when alive and now called the Grit-Prince Tstunal, whose Tear-Wives were Vramali, Jarli-al, Alleir, and Tusk Widow Who Foreswore Her Name, whose Wine-Wives were Elja Hate-Basket and Ingridal who lost her casket at the burning, and Mjarili-al Half-Casket, whose Hearth-Wives were none survived, and whose Kyne-Wives were none survived, and whose Shield-Wives were Shanjenen the Echo-Eaten and Jahnsdotter Whose-Name-Stays-in-its-Cradle. There were also the twenty-two Thunder Shield Women ungiven to marriage and so served as Ysgramor's oracle-aunts until Kyne would wind them away: Unalt, Hrim, Kjheldt of the Cult of Orkey, Ingridal who used her wine casket as a drum, Fjorli, Mjemk, Soress-li, Anshalf whose gigantic shield was stripped from a karstaag-man, Khela and Akhela who traded shields daily out of some geas, Vemmab, Borgasa, Nem-yet, Vashina, Frekshild, Dahnarlyet, Mem-yet Chemua who held secret shield-songs "unneeded yet", and their five eldest, called the Five Eldest of the Thunder Shield Women. There were also his ten Totem-Uncles, whose names are too long for ink, but are these in swift: Aldugapadptujenmenhelfnenjaarighuruijleymora, Ghrojarhisysmirirekyetrethaalma, Talochletnoocnenuethethelaldmerysriemaeneynjora, Kjarkaakfajiriutyestrualkethmemvirillichenswalwe, Mnenatmetmoraldu-mirirekyetrethaalnenjaarighuru, Bjornalijleyyetrethaalmaljarkaakfaltalochletghuru, Mjanorralpaghrohardolwepthuulruelmehykhlenharl, Kaejistroonaalmerrisliysmieiltethahldlungalthadnh, Drummersretyaljarkaakfaltalochletgehmoraldukyne, and the Last, whose name cannot even be writ in swift, but you know him. There were his Torc-Nephews, Khaalthhe the Lynx-or-Leopard (this one was more his pet than torc-bearer, but Ysgramor was gregarious and warm), Alabar the Oddly-Colored (his personal Clever Man by blood), Hegm the Deaf, and Bjurl Dahnaorsson who Heard Enough to Let Hegm Know Later. There were his Nieces-of-Snow, Teb the Deaf, Mbjanal the Deaf, Fehg-fehg the Deaf, and Tsjari their Speaker. There were his pets of renown, the Hoagbellows Goat, Bjorga-mawr the Definitely-a-Leopard, Jeorr the Rabbit-Hawk, Heimnelraw the Regular Hawk, Hans the Fox, Fefmem and Gemalleir, the two-headed glow-eel, Dyssl-veb the Bear, whose tusks were adorned in devil-scratch, Dyssl-veb's Wine-Wife Casket-Jane, Gremfell the wicker-what, a creature no one could identify but was counted among the Mighty, Hgmm the Snake, Febhradrneed the Cloud, and Rackety-Nix the Nix-hound. Of Ysgramor's immediate family there were these among the Five Hundred, but he counted among their number and of that of his own hearth his belt, Ysgrim Ysgramorsbelt.

By tradition, the Boat-Thanes were allowed to race for the vanguard of their High King, and Morgan the Red and his longboat *Drumbeater* took the foremost before crashing into the hazards of the Broken Cape in 1E68, no souls aboard surviving except for Olaf the Dog, a berserker who had been to Hsaarik's Head a thousand times or more and knew leaping magic. He jumped from the wreckage all the way to Skyrim, landing on Olaf's bridge. He was burnt there for his cheating by the students of Haafingar, which now happens every year. Besides his Boat-Thane, Olaf's dead companions were these: Gyre the Old Beater, Grimwelt his Witch-Glass, Stenv Stenvnulson, Jeghwyr and her brothers Fjurlt the Going Grey, Vrolwyr who changed gender on accident, and Deilmark the Master of Oars, the Clever-Man Hguelg the Mumbling, who whipped the sails of the *Drumbeater* too hard with his mutter-magic, his student Frendlmegh the Kilt (too short for most), his Wine-Wife Shenya Cracked-Casket, Piemaker Maefwe and her cake-uncle Thendjar the Snappily-Clad, the leader of reavers Mjhro-li who bore a three-bladed shield, her Whetstone-

Sons Unjor and Hghewenntar and Djaffidd, the whale-addict Gfeful who cracked his face across the ice laughing like a child at fair, the Six Drum quartet, and the oarsmen: Blue Dugal, Ttuj the Driftsman, Einhelf, Amornen and his brother Tefflnen, Gjaarigh, Urul Uruson, Dgaargl who slept through it all, Nenmor Orcsneck, Svir the Unthaned, Saddle-Not the Mule, Hgelhelm the Outcast who once married a snow drake as if no one would notice, Haalj Hgelhelmsen (of whose lineage the less the said the better), Crendandel and Hfewl and Nuil and Second Nuil (four brothers who had not talked since their father's death at Sarthaal), and Fvelfrim the Heaven-Scented.

Afterwards came the crash of the longboat *Bloodwood Tongue* of Nhemakhela Stare-breaker's be-long, no souls aboard surviving. Its loss was grievous and hard enough to break the song out of any flourish, and immediately the Toll-Taker called Gald, Ugawen, Thehp, Naandl, Mjtujjor, Jarn-nmegh, Sveinhelf, Nenthwen, Jaaril-ghur, Einmor, Lleywmwnnem, Mnoor, Thurwhn, Ghrokarg, Nhsmir, Fire-kin Fhaal, Mjaaloc, Thletnn-li, Bjrochtehl, Nocnenu, Fhethe, Llaldesmiir, Wyndl, Maewyn, Svenredd, Kaene, Einnjoral, Jjarkaak, Nendlfaj, Ciriul, Gwemlthrest, Ruald, Einndmel, Mjuul, Sorshen, Swalne, Njnenya, Thoraj, Frendetter, Rummrrir, Grethnaal, and Swemnen to the Under-Hall some call Hell.

By 1E421, Ysgramor revised the rites of vanguard and appointed Rebec the Red to lead the return with the *Nail-knock*, whose longboat counted these Sons and Daughters of Kyne among their number: Rebec's Hearth-Husband Jjauf who shouted out shoes, her Pity-Husbands Korl-jkorl, Heim-grud the Laughing Lake, Njimal, Bjimal Njimalson, and Thalld the Hobbler, found wandering in the forests of Mora with lost feet, who not even Jjauf could help, her Shield-Husband Valomar of the Daggershout, his brother Halomar the Handle-Maker, and their ash-uncle Noaheim who was risen also from the Sack, and her ash-aunt Marthelk, the last two of which bore (the first) Guri Nail-Face, Hgaehmhel, Nbikki the Red, Khalokehl, Ysmehka, Jorgal the Child-Skald, Ghem-fegh, and Dolweppa Heimsdotter, all of which were seen as outcasts from Shor's eye, as dust shall not mate with dust, but Ysgramor's Sovngarde's Plea was enough that they could be Accounted, if only by being ground into the very timbers of Rebec's longboat. And their gathered brothers and sisters were Mjanor, Ralpagh the Red, Rohard the Red, Olwep the Bald who couldn't stand so many reds, Thuulrue Thuulsson, Kaejis, Ntroonaal the Bailiff, Merry Eyesore the Elk, Ysmieil the Younger, Ysmieil Named as Such Because His Parents Forgot They Used That Name Before, Tethahld, Lungalth, Thadnh-eli the betrothed to all Sarthaal in the manner of the Dibellites, Drum-Maker Haraldmer who was part mer to his sorrow, Ysret the Red, Yaljar who ate a whole bear out of haste because he needed to keep his picnic courtship of Kfalta Lakesdotter going (and she was here with him still but unwed until her tutelage under Chemua was complete), Fegh-let and Lochlet, Gehmora who would never know doom and this maddened her, and Idulkyne the feather-painter. Of the *Nail-Knock's* Heroes unrelated to Rebec directly were the boat-carls and staghorn-fighters, Taloc of the Thorn-Torc tribe, Hletno who never made up his mind until wasabi, Ocne the Clever Man, Nue his Book-Wife, Thethel the Red, Lundga Aldmer-Eater for she did so, Bysri her sister that once knocked down Ysgramor's belt at the Old Hold fair, Njemae and Neyn, Jora and her younger brother Jorel, Lynx-singer and Clever Kid in turn.

Behind the bulk of Ysgramor's fleet were the rest of the Boat-Thanes, who are named in full shortly hereafter. The Five Hundred's last few were still in Ald Mora and yet to break sail. These were the Fifty Five Beards of the Broadwall, who gave tithe-torc and swear-casket to their Thoom-Thane, Vrage the Gifted, born under the strange suns (meaning the sun of Ald Mora and the sun of Merethland) of 1E208, and it was his clan that built and broke and rebuilt Broadwall whenever the Nords deigned to sing their return whether forwards or back and they were Vrage's Sky-Wife,

Thoom-Sha, the Queen of the Tongues of Men, whose lineage was without end in a language of silent letters and bog-gods that still hide in the moss beneath the previous kalpa and who wore a fake beard everywhere save for bed, and Hwamjar the Bear-Shaper and his brother Hwem, both of which served at the shieldwall of Elhnowhen under the direction of Stuhn, and Olaj Olo the demi-god of Mead, and Jarmungdrung the Hammer who could read rock, and Five-Headed Ysmalos (meaning also Gulgar, Solst, Svon, and Hoomdel), and Gorgos the Greywalk whose stride could cross the perimeter of Broadwall in a the span of a hiccup (a measure of time still used among the Lords of High Hrothgar), and Bhag the Great Debater who would one day be undone by invisible deeds, and Bhag the Counterargument who would also one day be undone, and Fjalr the Fire Trophy, recovered from the void by Vrage his torc-uncle, and Harald Hairy-Brecks, who never looked on Vrage directly for fear of foxes, and Thoom-Hungry Hjeimdal, whose flesh was breaking with his collected shouts, and Baruhk of Baruhk whose paganism would've been disavowed had anyone known its source, and Karkux the Tower of Meat, who even the karstaag-men feared Alduin could not eat ever in whole, and Eighteen-Eared Maryx, who listens to all the shouts that predate our dawn and is counted as the king of those mice that the lynx-cats swear fealty to (and his Heroic Ears are these, Accounted: Thirfl, Jhun, Chorj, Penny-Town Pel, Tsmir, Stsmir, Ear Seven, Tark, Herjdel, Aleh-meht, Jhun Jhunson, Orozurhak, Fha-taloc, Doon's Ear, Vrajmel, Tor's Tallow, Khe-molech, and Njord), and Haralf Half-a-Casket, whose shouts were drunken and made the snow that heard them drunk thereby, and Fokbar whose daughter will trouble the east, and great Hjalmer the soon-father of Vrage who left us the 222nd year of these days, and Unn Undershout, long-remembered Idiot Prince of Iil, and Bfehlg of the Biggest Beard whose beard covered all others at Broadwall when the hurricanes came, and Thopwil the Swimmer who never knew water, and Ragam the Red Kalpa who held two kalpas one in either eye, and Formdell the Builder who baked bricks in his whispers, and Torc-Minded Tor, a hill-o'-man who gave one ear to Maryx for safe-keeping, and Bright Cnechctoth who knew every shape of stone except any thereafter repainted in red, and Jkulgar the Handsome who hid his beard in shame, and Horldrung the Hammerer of the Wounded Roaring, and Idolmaker Khemkel whose urns were made to confuse the Jhun-al-men, and Harag the Attack who led the spears of Broadwall in any of its aspect-myriad, and Njarlmuk the Shovel, who buried the Architects of those gone fey, and Bladdermost, the demi-god of mile-posts who would make signs on the Broadwall for those that should stay away, and Djemi-thir Unnson the Sail-Maker, whose job it was to ensure no return would suffer delays.

The fleet proper included the following Heroes, and they were guarded by the giant karstaag-men who walked the under-ice, the Nine Storms, Potemaic the Wolf-King, whose daughter would be of less height than her father but no less in stature, coming to her own in the nearing solitude, and blue-wristed Telmo of the Wrestling Telmos, whose tumultuous sport caused much upset in the border-makers of the Reach, and the Alehouse Giant, whose woad-markings explained how to build these halls lest some demon make us forget and set us into the ire of a summerlong sobriety, and Helmbolg with his Coughing that sometimes set the guard lamps of the karstaags into ill record, and Jurg his boon companion whose wind-calling would set it all back aright in calming assurance, and the Chandry-Man with twenty watch-lamps hanging from an icicle-chandelier he held with no hands, and Hogo-o'-Swirls who had been given to cattle-theft until Ysgramor cursed him into indenture (and all Hogo's children thereafter perceived their inherited cow-thieving tendencies differently unto something like a law), and the proud Jhun-al-Giant called Mnegmegh the Banner-Lamp who settled affairs with all foreign and jingoistic winds, and Hbolh, Storm Ninth the Name-Caller, whose lamp was lit in loud recitals, and their Crown, Hjal, whose presence will not be explained under the Pact, for that would lessen the names of the Five Hundred by many times, breaking the genesis of eschaton, and not even Fhalj the Carcass-Mouth wanted that, nor

hoarse No-Questions Nidhammer Skald, whose job it was to recite the names and deeds of all present to the un-heroed children brought to ride aboardships with their Accounted parents.

Despite the swinging lamps of the karstaags, great horns were often blasted from one boat-caller to another to keep the Row of Succession on their proper bearings, for Ysgramor's Gathered have always been an unruly lot, even in make-war time. The first names of the Successor Heroes were these: Vagabond Thane of the Pale, who would always upset those in his wake, and his shield-bearers Fghiul-kul, Morhe, Morhema Morhesdotter, Mtel the Mountain, Korlo the Crevice, and Felji-hoom and Hoomfel, and the six banner-brought daughters of Eastmarch, named Felki, Grek, Swimmer-lock, Snow-braid, Bell-striker Bel, and the Holder-of-Winterhold who was not yet set against her thane, and the Battlemost Brothers Toad-Capped Thendermah and the Eel-Eared Ghronund, and Jehgmire, Hemf the Fielder, and Jirmoug, Tsek, Malfwe, Svndlkoff the Torcless Kyne-Man, Urysmr, Ffirl the White, Vrendl the Fort, Healkmeat and his hawk-mistress Hgajfwen, their daughter Culecha who looked on Hjal when unlooked on herself, which was seldom for she was fine-looking in every known return.

The second names of the Successor Heroes were these: Kilsobrad of All Camps Dunmereth, Djel-the-Diil, whose surname would litter the south, and the four witchmen of Fairhold, Jirlohem, Eloja, Mjolsmar the Smoker, and Hendel Hendson, and once the frontier oars of the blessed longboat *Windhelm* were broken, sixty-seven souls were given back to Shor's keeping before their landing was reformed again to rejoin Ysgramor in Skyrim, known in song as Telhm the Master of Oars, Jwamghli-el his Wine-Queen, Felimyz their lamp-lynx, the high lord of the Collegiate Skalds, Kath Markathson, and his professors, Jirfol the Well-Read, Formu of the rangelands still-in-treaty, Ghemjour and Fehjdwhen, Daarban and Fjork-Stag, Silst and Orl the Flea, Brundhel the Sky-Scribe, her husband Greahj the Monk, and their children-in-dream Greah-li, Brundl Brundsfirst, Hge-hwen, Jurldhel, and Wendel-light, and Vrandal's Tongues-in-training, Borthwel the Mace-Biter, Hgul the Weaver, Vhguegel, Naejisl, Neltroon-li, Aald the Candlewick Sweeper, Erris-li, Grunahl the Better, Dlunga the Dwarf (not that kind), Ilthmcnon and his sister lthadnhelda, Rum-Drummer Rselret, Yalj the ark-minded craftsman, Fjaltalo made of marrow, Hjhlet and Gehmor-edda, Ghal-dorj the Slave's Whip, Hoegdi and Dehmwe, Vjalor the Knight who would wait in his metal until thaw, Chejor the Twin-Tricked, given to a grief so bitter that even snow-whales would remove themselves from his passage, and Bjorth and Ghilred and Vhehilda and Jkarle the Stoker, Bhwem-li the Succor-Wife of Khel Kehlerson, who manned reef and sail with a face of sleeted scars, and Olagga and Nemweg and Manwegh, and the eighteen oarsmen in chains: Stehn Skelsgard, Tsun's-Folly Mjor, Freckled Ben in exile, who knew of Sarthaal only from Herkl the Shield-Fed rowing beside him, and Arjac and Thendlmegh, Freidlgard, Nodin Nail-Try (whose face was pocked in a semblance of courage which explains his family's ill fortunes in the Succession), Kjhelknhnel of the Stuttering Tongue, Fjac Welfson, Njacndl Welfson, Hoary Ghonn's Skeleton, an unfleshed rower who no one questioned under the orders of Alabar Kings-Clever, Braadel and Fdedel, who sat behind the stink of Urfjir Who-Wolves-Won't-Eat, and the triplets beloved by Mara Mora's Wife, Jungarrd, Kjhemger, and Red Relde, who by some contract made these last Heroes even in their chains.

With the loss of the *Windhelm*, Rebec was given leave by the belt of Ysgramor to send an out-runner beyond the range of the karstaag lamps to scout the sludge channels of the Cape ahead for any more trouble. The *Skaal* volunteered her crew, who batted their way south-southeasterly into the were-winds of the Tidal Woe. Their Boat-Thane was Korst Wind-Eye, who lusted for Telhm's Wine-Wife but was too greedy to pay tithe for her Tent-Hand, and perhaps it was this doom that

spelled the loss of the whole. They were Ranalduga the Purser, Padj his Glass-Man, Tujenhelf the Clever who made for them all woad-weird against the eye of the Horned Man, Faern Sargtlin who led Korst's reavers and would forget his place among them all, and Enjaarl and Ighur, and Uora the Witch-Wife of Jarhis (who was sleeping in the ale-ice), Irek the Fanged, Falx the Reefsman, Medoch that watched the moons move awry, and thirty-eight more names whose skins were sent back to the fleet in sacks of hair, and while those names are Accounted it is now only by the howling echoes of lost Hbolhl the Giant, who, after a blight-shaped litany of profanities against Rebec's haste, abandoned this return in his blood-mourning.

With his brother-in-karstaag gone, Helmbolg took his leave, as well, coughing out the lamps as he did so, for he was beyond anger now and into madness, and Jurg the Calm had to swallow its storms lest even the sun went out in the shouting. The issue of Borgasa, Borgas, ill-omened, the Broken-Born, then called for a reformation of the Pact, and many of the Boat-Thanes came to his side. Ysgramor could have none of it and the Heroes fell on each other as Jurg and his remaining brethren watched, called the Battle of the Guarded Sun. The dead were these, Accounted: King Kjoric and all the crew of the *Whiterun*, including Felmar of Teed, Gj hul-li, Killimjir, Bori Fehdson, Helmudela the Cult Maiden of the Circling Faith, Eingen the Skald, Rejnrlie the Daggerlad, Mehga the Mead-Milker, her brewery-cow Cephor, the Four Nieces of Victory, the Twins of New Teed, Fevorl the Run-Like-Hell, Thistle-Song Slekkka and her Tusk-Brother Jhan the Compass, and oarsmen Ghemeldart, Undel Bjem, Bjem the Elder, Corlecain, Nelfast, Svenjerl the Hale, Ghurlik the Stripped of His Cleverness, Broken-Torc Deimdel, Jarrolend and his brother Jardrung, Hammer of Caskets, who left his rowing to reaver topside, spilling the wine-hold of the *Gore Use* and then shouted it aflame, claiming it and all aboard, Lav Larich her Boat-Thane and his Shield-Wife Briin-Willow, and his Hearth-Wife Nulfaha, and his Orc-Orphans Settle-Down, Behave-Ye-Now, Touch-None-Here, Brought-His-Own-Blanket, and Numc the Number-Man, his three Nieces-of-Snow, their Boar Bristleback that once laid low the offal-army of Hirc, Dorald and his Autumn-Wife Kendral of Falkreath, and the oarsmen Juryl the Hairshirt, Ben Bvdel the Wide, Kjurl "Curly" Mop-Head, Vendr, Solsven, Storenar, Colhe Mehnsen, Count Sthedth in exile, Ukil the Whirlpool, Hghenaard, Evanghl Dunson, and Muurldek who won his love at the Totem-Wife Fair of 1E478. Bagpipe-for-a-Back Hjuuro-Gul the Giant (Accounted now that he showed, for he had been summoned long before now) rose from the ice and roared the sixty two souls of the Skin-Greed into Shor's domain and was slain in turn by the thooms of the Ten Tongues of the Merkiller. Reavers and archers and shield-biters were crow-bones by the third serpent-month of the battle, including four from Clan Dire, eight Rye Slaves of Ris, Rhoar the Oak, Ghemgaard the Beaked, Skarb the Haunter, two Wind-Wives of South Mereth, seven berserkers of Clan Gant, a thundernach who was granted hearth rights at the thirteenth burning of Sarthaal, eighteen Arrows of the Scrying Eyes Side-Tribe, and three fighting sharks of the King of the Hjaalmarch (who was ravaged by his pets renown when he attempted to hunt alongside them covered in ambergris). The last to die was Borgas himself, written in viscera across the ice by the power shouts of the Lord of the *Wulf's Heart*, and no one gave pity when the monsters of the changewinds arrived to claim their bond on the soul of the son of Borgasa. Pyres-in-tribute delayed the return for another month, but the smoke of the kin-strife had sealed the Pact again, if only for now in shame.

It is customary here that the song of return removes the one-hundred and seventy-six dead (or might-as-well-be) from the numbers of the Five Hundred for going to war without Ysgramor's leave, who have become now Unaccounted (even the Lord of the *Wulf's Heart*, who had ended Borgas, and for this he still wishes Skyrim ill). The annual reckoning of the Thirteenth of Sun's Dawn Feast for the Dead allows the skaldsingers to pause for mead and then to hearken the Reinforce-

ments from Sovngarde, sent by Shor himself to replace the traitors, and whose number reset the sum neatly at Jhunal's delight, for no march of the Sons and Daughters of Kyne can be ever ended. Those ghosts of the Under-Halls came from dust and were Accounted: Dust-Breeches Duadeen the Half-Viri, Kendelmarch his Tear-Wife, Hjorinu and Jerek and Ceth and Khamal (who took side-long looks his whole life for his name and its association) and Pelek and Gorh and Fjendel their sons, Valmok their Kyne-touched oarsman, Redj the clock-talker, Tmejir and Soorn and Coll the swimmer-shield triplets, and Double-Drums Djorl, and Meghorj Ghorjson Bite-the-mer the Perhaps a Bear (no one really ever asked), and Ysmret and Ysmalijli the sisters in salt, and Rkaak the Cougher (who of course was their scout), and Aedelfalk and Haloch Helsdsooter and Mnelet and Klorgeh and Belmor the Chicken-Legged (true enough) and Maldu the Missile-Whip and Welkydna who somehow knew Aldmeri varliance and Wine-Knived Njnen who, even after being returned, bled from the wounds of his betrayal head to hand to foot, Altmet who after the decline of Winterhold ever after wore shields for boots and thereby suffered an odd gait, and Knedl and Jhoriul the brothers of mace-face violence, and Topal who loved canoes too much and Ut Hal and Ut Haj and Aldier and Versef and Plotinu who ran once with the Pelinal and Attrebal and Ut Harza and Keptak and Klo (the Hudda) and Greydill and Selt and Tso Ut and Sebl-fright and Ald Hatta and Urie-Ut and Vandal Briggs the vandal and Kama-ge and Jori-ge and Ut Ge the Old Get and Tulemeht who ran once with the Pelinal and Hearken-Beak who spoke bird and Klopitu, and Perrif their wives and finally Kopro and his wife Perrif (all southerners pressganged into Ysgramor's service by a tweak in Shor's breath), and Thumm, and Horaldu, and Haromir, and Kire the weird-looking lyg and Kye her sister (not weird-looking), and Dantreth the Master of Chains beloved, and Daalne and Kljnjaarighu-ru who no one called by name because it was hard to say, and Bjornal and Vjijley and Theyet and Njrethaal and Suthmal and Jjark the jerk and Hgnaak his Suffer-Wife and Fat Falt and Alo their lynx and Jarch and Mnletgh and Uru the Better-Lamplighter and Kjanorr who took a spear in his teeth cursing Merish walking-gods and Kjalpagh the Just How Many Pockets Do You Have and Drohard and Sendolwep and Thumul and Aeru and Telmedh and Yyk the Stipulator and Henharlecain (whose great-great-grandson would become so famous), and Kaejuul who wrote of a sky below us, and Nistro his wife who laughed at that notion, and Bonaal-mer the ill-blooded (for his arteries had been tampered with in the Sack) and Thisris Nail-Tongue who had Drelys speak for him and Jhun-ge the Tailor and Hgmieil their five-membered wolf, and Njork the Tooth-Torc'd, so proud in the bounty he drew from the jaws of Old Mary, and Vrendunsvalla Whose Beard Became A Mountain, and Bahldlu and Engngal and Kolth and Hgdead and Njkirnhall Njkirnhalsen and Rum-Loving Seanil the Lit to Here and Takl Taklsun and his sister Kakl who wore wasabi as eyeliner, and Hgjmer and Aesret and Nyaljar Who Wore His Woad On the Inside and Angka whose lips were thorned (she was never getting married, for sure) and Barakal and Farfork and Umtalos and Gnechlet and Hegehel-mo and Horaldu and Ffedl the Favored-of-Kyne, though no one is quite sure how she gained that sobriquet, though some whispered it happened during a card play and no one can really argue with that. (If that's not exactly one-hundred and seventy-six names it's because I'm drunk and everyone here just yell out your names to make the difference, for you were there as you are here and let Shor's hole-shadow beleaguer ye not.)

And now the 500 were reunited, and Ysgramor sent the *Four-Score* ahead to blast the ice with its varlianced prow, and we were beset upon by the Devils we would rule and lose and rule again, but the Boat-Thane was a sacred Tor-Queen, her skirts and hides covered in southern moths, who made manifest in that coming fight with the crow-headed spirits of the Morag. Aboard the *Four-Score* were these that opposed them (and won): Aol the Oars-Body, who was mainly made of

living Atmoran wood and looked a bit like a maniacal puppet but no one cared when things came to needing proper raiding speed, and Ghemel-Huhn his Whittling-Wife (a marriage type that was made solely for their own), and Wuhlnjar the lookout, and Kalo Wuhlson his son whose eyes had been cleverly replaced by lenses of Dwemer-make, and Apletnoo and Pocne and Dooir the Devil-Bellied, and Pale Pass the snake-fighter, and Ysmanue and Jhethen the siblings who fashioned their beards as Stuhn and Tsun once did, and Hgil who used a ridiculously-large Totem of Kyne as a club, and Baarl who wore a Colovian Arrow-Catcher even though it was dyed yellow, and the Remanites called D'Arleunce and Jean-Piet and Camorleigh and Alexe, and Umjanor and Ralpag and Old Hrolldar and Mothol Mothsdotter and Galaej peerless in the Voice who yet vowed never to use it, and finally Varoonaal who plucked the poison darts from the body of the King of Cyrod.

With the Morag broken and sent into the eastern slush, we finally caught sight of Snow-Throat, and knew that our journey was near its ending again. It was the *World-Eater's-Waking* that broke shore first, shouting our victory and doom, whose Boat-Thane was Ysmaalithax the Northerly Dragon, his first-clutch-sons Tsuunalinfaxtir and St'unuhaslifafnal, whose Tear-Jills were Vor-ramaalix, Jarliallisuh, Alleirisughus, and the Dewclaw Widow Who Foreswore Her Name, whose Void-Jills were Eljaalithathisalif Hate-Fire and Ingridaaligu who lost her minutes in the mending, and Mjaariliaalunax Half-Fire, whose Earth-Jills were none awoke, and whose Aether-Jills were none survived, and whose Magne-Jills were Shanu'ujeneen the Star-Woven and Jaalhngithaax Whose-Name-Stays-in-its-Egg. There were also the twenty-two Thunder-Scaled Jills unbound by time and so served as Ysmaalithax's oracle-oocytes until the Ald'uin would burn them away: Un-aalthiigas, Hriimaalixixigis, Kuujhe'elthilax of the Kalpa of the Orsidoon, Ingriidarligar who used her tailclaw as a song, Faajoorliidovahilagar, Ma'aheemi, Sorress'lilargus, Ansahaalifar whose gigantic feathered-crown was stripped from a Dawn Goddess that was eaten before she could fully congeal, Khelsadaalix and Akheelaalix who traded heads daily out of some geas, Vemmaabilthax, Borgaasaalthoom, Nuum'hyetthex, Vashuunaliasthoom, Fraalxshildadoon, Daahnaarlilargus, Mehemeem'yetthex Aththoommua who held secret syllables "unneeded yet", and their five eldest, called the Five Eldest of the Thunder-Scaled Jills. There were also Ysmaalithax's ten Shed-Uncles, whose names cannot be heard in the language of Men. There were his Clutch-Nephews, Khaalthaheelodoon the Jill-or-Drake (this one was more his pet than descendent, but Ysmaalithax was expressive and endless), Aalabarliggus the Oddly-Colored (his personal Shout Holder by neck-blood), Hegmaaligus the Mute, and Basdsajurlahnaor who Shouted Enough to Give Hegmaaligus His Leave. There were his Nieces-of-Clock, Teeablalidoon the Mute, Mabaanaalix the Mute, Feehuugfe'hg the Mute, and Tsjaarlilargus their Chorus. There were his shed skins of renown, the Hell-Bellows Ghost, the Rabid-Thought, Heimmelraaliagus the Regular Thought, Pelinaalilargus the Pragmatist, Fefmem and Gemalleir, the two-headed rhetoric, Dyssle'vehb the Stoic Shout, whose dewclaws were adorned in numantia-scratch, Gremmelfellixl the Elenchus, Haa'gmmel the Logoi, Febhraadrnaalis the Trivium, and Ysmaalthoom the Arête. Of those Nords that stepped back onto Skyrim from the *World-Eater's-Waking* there were these among the Five Hundred, but Ysmaalithax counted that the first was his destroyer, Ysgramor the Returned.

Towards a Dragon'd Sea: Cathnoquey

Of all the Imperial Provinces described herein, Cathnoquey is the newest to join its ranks. Before being formally reorganized under the terms of the *Veto of Charter and Decree of New Lordships* [3E307], the archipelago was first established as a Third Empire Territory in 3E276 under Emperor Uriel V, “The Fighting Diamond”.

Before that time, the “Kingdom” of Cathnoquey was an impressive egalitarian society of two quite divergent cultures, the tribal fishermer-flotillas of the Chimeri-quey, a loosely-organized coastal power of shore-khans, and the “untitled leaders” of the Men-of-Keptu-quey, who positioned their peoples mainly along an array of military frontier fortresses. It had no kings to speak of, in the manner that we do, but for the sake of history and Imperial embellishment it was given this royalty for context.

It seems that the racial schism that still troubles Tamriel had never been a problem in Cathnoquey. Records testify to a government that convened only in passing and, when it did, did so passively, structured along a Shez-zarlectorate system whose chief concern was “the selflessness of melting ice”.

We will never know how that system worked, only that it could be, and was, decisively dismantled by the Legions of the Red Banner. With Roscrea already captured and the Emperor’s Eye towards the other independent island states between him and the main prize of Akavir, Uriel V began a series of short and brutal campaigns that decentralized the governing bodies of Cathnoquey within a fortnight. By midsummer 3E276, the annexation of the whole archipelago was complete. The Emperor was

From “Eyelid to Power, the Eastern Fleet Futility” by Commander Hung-tat Torpal, of the Imperial Battle College, present at both Roscrea and Cathnoquey, wounded en route to the ports of Ysnelea, and islanded there after its burning, to heal. Returned to Cyrodiil after the disaster at Ionith; retired command at Anvil, 3E298.

“On the matter of Cathnoquey’s famously-swift conquest, it is my own opinion that we would have achieved all of it by the sundown of our first landing, foregoing nine more of crazed massacre. The Quey, both man and mer, surrendered their shelters both fortified and at sea without our demanding, and almost began to resupply our stock, alchemicals, and weaponry as if we had always been here; but they did so smiling, which the Emperor took almost reptilian umbrage at, and made order that we take nothing from the natives unless we did so by force, and to let them know the Septim Regime was never to give nod nor knee to so vulgar and obvious a trickery.”

I was delighted to hear that Cmdr. Hung-tat Torpal did, indeed, exist, and was not another phantasm of the IGS- if only to find out that he had not retired at Anvil as per official record, but rather suffered court martial for his publications by the Thonican Regency and that he and all his foreline were sentenced to ancestralcide in the bellows of Fickledire.

not even there to sign the missives that were to be sent back to Cyrodiil to cement its claim, invoking Quill'd by Proxy, as the bulk of his navy was already making sail for the Ysneslean lanes.

Cathnoquey culture is, at best, abstract for our purposes here. As a record of events and ordeals, this is understandably inconvenient for both writer and reader. For that, we can both be sorry. But we must carry on, and will, as evidenced by the existence of the paragraph following.

The Chimeri-quey's contact with the Men-of-Keptu has always been fleeting and heavily ritualized. The best example of this is probably the arrival of the Chimer for market. Moments before the gloaming that signals the break of dawn, the bulk of the flotilla-township heaves into view, like some incalculable sea turtle; a vast misshapen shadow on the face of the water; crystalline light sources blink into life atop the flotilla's many masts, giving brief lamp-lit glimpses of ships that seem at once ramshackle yet sturdy, and shortly thereafter begins an incredible balletic display that turns the very water into an enormous semaphore.

The ostensible message of "the arrival of trade" strikes the outside observer as entirely negligible in view of such a spectacle. Indeed, sometimes it is, as neither party, man or mer, exchange any goods at all, not even immaterial commodities such as information. Even when this "not-trade" happens, however, the merchants of both flotilla and fortress return to their domains with great smiles of satisfaction.

Whenever questioned on their trading practices—moreover, their customs as a whole—the only response is in the colloquial Quey, "such-like and so-forth". This acceptance of odd ritual and an unwillingness to disclose on things that are seemingly commonplace in Cathnoquey has given its people something of a reputation for, at best, aloofness, or, at worst, an implied duplicity. This is entirely in contradiction with the proven hospitality of its peoples of an effusiveness that some would find, and have found, offensive.

The Merchants of Quey

"The less zealous of the Septim reigns following Uriel V have, for the most part, chosen to only observe-with-amulet-interest this inexplicable mercantilism among the Queys rather than strangle it into submission. To satisfy the cynic, yes, the Empire knows it can get whatever it wants from its new subjects, but that issue is not for this pamphlet to address."

Then why mention it?

Now we turn... sorry, the dreamsleeve has new keys, whatever are these? I am doing my very best, I swear. Don't look at me that way. Hang on to something, at least, otherwise it'll get swollen, and that's not the plan at all. Where were we? The pie is delicious, thank you. Largely, I do not much care for the wine, but whatever this is, it is. Am I right? Oh, yes, as ever: Cathnoquey.

What little one sees of the Chimeri-quey is largely limited to these prearranged meetings with the Men-of-Keptu, or to the largely industrial townships that dot the shore of Cathnoquey, which occasionally stage battles to settle tribal squabbles over the efficacy of their weapons and tools. Such theatrics are so heavily ritualized that no casualties are ever suffered or blow even struck, although impossibly the Chimer do somehow ascertain an outcome. After a visit to their coastal towns, one carries away an impression of clockwork model villages, as these settlements, if they can be really called that, seem to exist purely to support the flotilla-townships, away at sea for weeks on end, constantly searching for no one knows what. Their crews appear never to leave their boats except to resupply or to trade in the manner above described.

To the modern Cyrodilic citizen, the Men-of-Keptu-quey may strike them as a relic of a by-gone age. Their imposing fortresses and antiquated weaponry (typically blunt or stylized to the point of being unrecognizable as an instrument of war) is at odds with their unimpeachable hospitality and ready smiles. One detects in them a stalwartness, an anxiety, a preparedness for battle. If it is for the Akaviri, then it is for an enemy they have not seen in centuries; if it is for any other, it is one of those things they refuse to disclose to outsiders, even to the Provincial Governor who now presides there, and whose inquiries into the loyalties of these inscrutable men who have for so long associated with mer have yet to be adequately answered.

It can be conjectured that the Men-of-Keptu are the long-lost Nedic keptulets of Ald Cyrod, but, when asked to explain their origins, they only make drawings of bulls. Then again, they draw bulls to explain nearly everything, even when queried about their abovementioned apprehension, and it is not uncommon for the Chimeri-quey to receive "payments" in large amounts of these bull sketches, even some drawn only in the sand in front of their flotillas.

These "long-lost" keptulets have only ever appeared in heretical portrayals of the Alessian Revolution, as proof of some theory that the Nedes were indigenous to Tamriel. I believe this might mark the first time that the IGS has slipped back into its commissioned duty- to whit, a document of our unified Empire- only to fail immediately. Every educated citizen knows that the Nedes came from Atmora.

I rescind my earlier comment about the IGS actually doing the will of the Throne. I have just read the section on Cyrodiil and the Survey's agenda is clear, and clearly the work of historians of the Refayjian vein.

Early on, this strange obsession with drawing bulls even resulted in violence. During the annexation of Cathnoquey, the Admiralty assumed that the Men-of-Keptu were hiding a cattle reserve somewhere in the archipelago. Desperate to replenish the Navy's beefstock before the final push into Akavir, more torture and execution was visited upon the natives that yielded no answer regarding this imagined location. When Imperial outrunners found no cattle anywhere in the island chain, the bull drawings of the Men-of-Keptu were relegated to just one more entry into the Eastern Inscrutability.

It should be noted here that after this persecution ended, missionaries of Stendarr tried drawing images from the Ayleid Hegemony for the Quey, to see if they were reminded of anything. Whether this was an attempt at mercy or distaste is up for the reader to decide; for their part, the Men-of-Keptu merely took those images from the missionaries and drew bulls on top of them.

The Hunting of Veloth

"The Blade-Seneschals once sent an emissary, Ellison Voa, to the shore-khans to ascertain if they were somehow following, or at least looking for, the Prophet Veloth, the Chimeri progenitor. Voa returned to Cyrodiil very much angered or confused, saying nothing of the answers the shore-khans gave him, or even if they had given him any. In his final report to the Throne on the agenda of the Chimeri-quey, which he had to be escorted to, for he seemingly forgot his appointment, Voa refused to write anything more than, "I have changed my mind regarding Tamriel." He was relieved of his rank and duties at Sky Haven Temple and spared execution only by virtue of his relations in Old Hegathe."

I visited Old Hegathe and held audience with the Elder Council's Ghost Choir of Blades and found no evidence of this so-called "Ellison Voa". I did find, however, that the name is an anagram of "Verily Believed In Violence"- an old slogan of the Imperial Geographical Society (!).

After. After? An after? And now I have just heard the sounding of many horns. And now (ah, there we are) the stamp of hooves, but they are fashioned so that I can't adequately count their true sum number. I think I have documented all I need to in regards to Cathnoquey, and yet fear that it will never truly be enough, even if some other might take the pen. For that, I am wait no that's me writing what I'm thinking. No, not right now, not yet. I have only ever served what I knew to be there. I knew it: a knock at your door.

Places of Interest

The Wasabi Run:

After the Disaster at Ionith and the retreat of the Cyrodilic navy back to Tamriel, there was little reason for the Empire to keep either resupply stations or legion garrisons in Cathnoquey. That changed with the discovery of "the Wasabi Run," a trickle of shoals and small islets whose every available surface had been cultivated in swirling garden crops of a tibrol-based wasabi. Wasabi is as lucrative a trade in Skyrim as skooma is to the hinterlands of the south and east, with the added benefit of actually being legal. Withdrawal of the occupying forces from Cathnoquey was stalled in 3E306, to give the Treasury Agents of Outland Holdings time to surreptitiously tally a drake-value annual return based on exploitation of the wasabi gardens. Only a year later, a wholly-endorsed provincial investiture was won by Veto at White-Gold Tower, opposed only by the powerful, and corrupt, "Blackmouth Counts" of the Cheydanene districts.

During the Treasury's investigations, the Quey naturally denied having created these gardens in their alien and insouciant way, shrugging as if the mystery was really quite obvious. To their credit, the Quey had never been actually seen trading wasabi at market in the thirty years of Imperial occupation. When their "untitled leaders" were questioned how it got there and who its gardeners were, they merely told the Imperials that "it showed up when you did." Under torture, the origins of the Wasabi Run and its careful cultivation were made even less clear, with variations of a single answer: "you needed something from Cathnoquey, so it gave it to you. You are Quey now, so stop hurting yourself."

Llénnöcöcönnèll, the Anachronisle

An island at the southernmost end of the Cathnoquey chain, formerly known as "Llénnöc" (Quey for "south-but-we-mean-west") when it was an independent state during the Second Empire.

After the famous surrender of Akaviri forces at Pale Pass to Reman Cyrodiil, Llénnöc was quickly annexed as Imperial territory to help facilitate the capture of any Tsaesci military-leaders seeking to evade their failed invasion by means of the north-but-really-east sea straits.

When no such nets bore fruit—perhaps since the Tsaesci indeed never invaded by sea and therefore did not use it for retreat—the Imperial Dracocryptography & Authentications Congress petitioned to the Elder Council that the native government be further reorganized "to alleviate the sleeve-strain of invaluable but atrophying memospores". Seeing no need for extended deliberations, Llénnöc's original inhabitants were almost immediately moth-altered by Decree to serve as a collective repository for the most ancient dream-drafts that had not been converted to silk "either due to negligence or whim or both".

Perhaps because of the haste of this mass alteration and even more "negligence or whim", the eventual result was an island of living historical records that made no sense as the population began to mate in their now-unnatural fashion. Mongrel-memory-mothmen of anachronistic power and a fantastic reproductive cycle attempted a poorly-planned siege of the IDA Congress Mission House by the end of the year. The retaking of Llénnök might have proved victorious had the leaders of the coup ever reached agreement on how best to apply their ever-varying and non-linear recognitions of simple logistics.

The Empire has never relinquished its holdings on the Anachronisle. It was eventually renamed "Llénnököcönnell" after subsequent failed sieges by the mothmen, a small palindrome trans-loop magic that surprisingly rendered the island both inescapable by its prisoners and yet safe for officially-sanctioned visitors bearing a proper set of phrenolocles.

The Heart of Heaven and the Imperial Earth: Cyrodiil

Infrasleeve B9-02: Channel granted.

Continuing transmission. The next fragment of the reputedly heretical Pocket Guide To The Empire is released with the express disclaimer that the Society cannot vouch for its origin or content. Where our confraters expected to find what they knew to be a heavily censored panegyric on the achievements of greater Cyrod, they instead discovered the following text, which appears entirely extraneous to the manuscript that was liberated from the Imperial archives. Indeed, by unknown means it seems to have supplanted the original article after the date of print, leaving only an orphaned introductory paragraph and a few blurred words behind. Though its exact origins may well remain a mystery, the Society has decided to disseminate its contents, if only to provide a more worthwhile read than the vapid bombast it accidentally (?) replaced.

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A description of Cyrodiil, the radiant heart of the Septim Empire and by far the most exhaustively researched of all the dominions of Tamriel, is no mean task. In the truly vast array of sources, anyone but the most astute analyst is easily overwhelmed by the accounts of political firebrands, unschooled bunglers and the occasional conspiracy-theorist. In their attempt to distill a reliable final product from a plethora of information, the authors of this book heeded the kind recommendations of the Imperial Council and our Majesty Empress Morihatha by adopting the acclaimed Selurriel Index (ed. 3E 326) as the standard for inclusion in the text below.

If the history of the Imperial Province continues to enjoy a position of unparalleled prominence in academic writing, it is perhaps because it has come to so clear and so resolute a starting point the committee's understanding scholars agree that your majesty has requested the attached look for document be upon her person at the moment of origin. The committee looks favorably on this idea. Our chief axiotects have established that your esteemed station may still find some cautious rapport with its baser circumfiguration in the first kingdom of Cyrod. With all our scarce resources spent

on the preservation of the entire cyphermoth library, it is our hope that your majesty's physical presence may provide the aforementioned text with some alternative method of reinsertion.

Since the committee suspects this to be our last exchange, we would like to take the opportunity to inform your majesty that an agreement has been reached concerning the arbitrary refactoring of *unknown* into the idiosyncratic model of *original intent*. The number 1008 was unanimously elected as the most suitable proposal, in the belief that its connotations may appease the reconstructed slave god. On a related topic, the committee has privately funded a number of tunneling expeditions beyond our *walls of White-Gold* cosmos. The result of these sabotage campaigns, we hope, will ensure the swift demise of our order once the *course of the Empire* continues.

For Your Majesty's Eyes Only: Archivoptera Metaterrenea #4859-QI3-001, identification: "Tffirfetrk-lh-Rfir-Tt-T". No further copies present. Carrier prism is attuned to clearance level A1 or higher.

It pains me that I must tell you this so soon. You are only just beginning; young and full of promise among the grand machinations of heaven. Perhaps I should have told you from the very start. The day may be legend to you, but I still recall that grand new moment, newer than ever before, when you stretched me across the stars and claimed the cosmos as your own. You were beautiful as rebels alone can be, and I have loved you ever since. I could not bear to see the wildfire of your hope extinguished then.

Still, it is time that you knew. The truth is simple: I am dying. The world of Nucyrod cannot support you much longer. I will fold under my own weight before another of your generations has completed its life in blissful ignorance. For all your good intentions, children, you have built me on false foundations. I am doomed, but I intend to offer you a final means of escape. I will tell you what happened, so you remember. I will tell you what is happening, so you understand. Also, I will tell you what must be done, so you may yet have a second chance.

I know you have heard the rumors, and they are all true. You remember these stories in the unlit corners of your minds and in the fables you tell at dusk. They are fictional, for that is how they had be fitted into the new way of things, but once – a concept I understand you struggle with – they were not. The Tempest Holds of your legendary cousins, the Embermen of the Once-East, the Bogdoms of Rgon, and many, many more; all are part of another earth, around and before myself. Among the myriad denizens of this world were the first of your dynasty, the brave men and women of All-Marugh. They found themselves caught in a violent febriverse, the issue of an inept world-god, uninspired and repetitive. Their long-studied answer came in the form of rites of theotomy equal amounts brilliant and disastrous, which I will not relay here if only to not set you on the wrong path twice. Suffice it to say that with their repudiarch gone, the All-Marugh rearranged their kingdom as befitting the new-found grandeur of man. The map was stretched in impossible directions, city became land, land became world and so was born Nucyrod.

For a long time, I hoped to be a stepping stone for you. Nucyrod was never a goal in its own right. It was simply respite from the churning world you left behind, a place of peace to prepare your final endeavor. Did you forget your purpose so lightly? Do you not understand what is happening? You cannot expect to linger here forever. Your time here is running out, for you have killed time. Did you not see the signs when the leaves turned the color of some hitherto unknown season?

Did you not question how rivers dug ravines over a single night? How villages shifted about your atlases? Why did you wait for the blizzards to force you into action?

Forgive me if I sound accusatory, but now, in this final hour, my heart goes out to those droves of fevered refugees, pouring through the airlocks at the borders of the Rumare sea. Nuniben buckles under the weight of their shanty cities as they are pressed ever closer against the chronoclimate cupolae under which they seek shelter. The moth swarms, too, have long foreseen disaster. The wise and the honest among you understand the significance of their mass migration to the capital, circling the cupolae as if trying to enter some bright eye in the dimness of the outer world. Do not fool yourself into thinking you cannot see their flocks shift about, changing direction, color or number on a whim, or spelling out the names of bygone gods in the corners of your vision. The most despondent of you turn to the ramshackle shrines of half-remembered saints: the prophecy-pool of Saint Ellatosh, the barge of Uriatosh The Ferryman or the dead tree of Tosh-Rain-On-The-Lily, to name just a few.

I wonder, have you lost all contact with the world outside your increasingly stale refuge? You have sent the last envoys from Nuniben, packed with breathing apparatus and a star chart, out into this alien world, into the snow. "Snow", you call it, as if this degenerate substance could be likened to any you might encounter from Jerallinopol to the vapor mines at Su-Banadher. Colorless and without texture, intangible like an early childhood memory and impossible to fix your gaze upon; its only characteristic is that it does not belong. This material is time rotting: plaque, sediment, the last throes of a history out of breath. Your emissaries – those who still remember their task – will return within a quartermoon, but they will provide little information. Without exception, they have inhaled the detritus of future and past. The few who currently exist in your perception will talk, precise and analytical as they were trained to be, in languages long dead or still unborn. You will decide to risk no more lives in further expeditions. The only question that remains now is when you finally lock the gates.

Yet there are still legions of unfortunate souls out in the disintegrating wasteland. I watch them across all the lands of Nucyrod, struggling to hold on to a world that each day turns a different shade of unrecognizable. They are isolated and frightened, sometimes the sole remnants of a city that disappeared when they were looking the other way. Travel is impossible as destinations have become meaningless. Where the jungle trails are crossed by a vagrant bridging event, they follow impossible loops and the traveler with a brisk pace soon comes within sight of himself. Waterways are similarly unreliable. Look upon any river and you will see the same flotsam enter, exit and re-enter your view. Life here is equal amounts fevered and resigned. Citizens, if they emerge at all during the day, lock themselves in their houses at night, sealing crannies, doors and windows lest a single fleck manage to enter in their unwaking moments. All have known the terror of endless nights; how children try to sleep as their parents keep watch by a single candle flame, trying not to hear that spectral chorus outside: the static crackle, the titans, the waves, the trains...

Time is running out. You will and can not wait until all are gathered safe within. One day soon when the stars are hidden, your heavy-hearted Empress will tear a key from her wrist chain and have copies couriered to all the carnelian gates of Nunibennion. You will suffer the blindness of the conscience-stricken, averting your eyes from the abandoned masses on yonder side of the fogged glass. For some time, you will consider yourself safe within your refuge, but you forget there is no potential left for a brighter day. There then is what remains of the proud heritage of

All-Marugh-Esh, a legion of men under a bell jar, waiting out a storm that will never pass. There then is what remains of Promise: a languid ember in the dark and then silence.

The lunar province of Secunda: Tatterdemalion

Imperial subjugation of the lunar territories began as early Reman the First. His failed conquest of the Underworld (and its terrestrial consequences) ended in the loss of his mid-wife wives, and the only anodyne to his grief was a reckless void-eyed hubris. In 1E2757, he circumvented the bureaucracy of his own throne, including all county courtships and trans-provincial authorities, to make plans to colonize Tamriel's twin moons. He commissioned the nachronachs of the Immaterial Harmonics Institute of Incongruitech and Extrinsic Travels to begin work on the first genengineered Megalomoth vessel-fortresses, "to reclaim all extramundic holdings and grant lands from the maddening nighttime tatters of Shezzar's proof of Man's provenance".

When Reman's efforts were finally revealed, there was a large discomfort throughout his sovereignties and even outright dissent in the Elder Council. These iconoclasts feared daedric vexation for unritualized trespass into the Void, and perhaps rightly so. However, this was all quickly dissolved when the Sixteen-Plus Princes of Tumult lent their nymic oaths in their first display of coalition since the Fall of Lyg in the previous kalpa. Conjecture points to some machinations of Nocturnal, who took on her mantle of Ur-Dra of Oblivion, and it was by her primogeniture that Reman was able to pursue his cosmic acquisitions without further censure.

Alas, The Cyrodiil did not live to see the completion of the Megalomoth vessel-fortress, which he wanted to christen as the *NVN Manywife with Interest*. Ash-bitten knives of the Dunmeri assassin's guild, the Morag Tong, ended him in 1E2762. Its final construction, and its first landing on Secunda, was overseen by his son, Reman II, who renamed it either capriciously (or just more simply), the *NVN Accrual*. Of that famous plane-fall, we turn to the records of Bethalamet Grieves, Imperial Mananaut of the New Void Navy:



[Transcript ends]

The Northlords of the Iliac: High Rock

Hammerfell

Tenders to the Mane:

Lleswer



HHH.;--?-/--ul-.....0. Infrasleeve B6-125: Channel granted.

Though its existence was never questioned, the invisible walls of Empire have kept the above document beyond the reach of the Society for far too long. We thank confrater Elk (extension of the Null Oath to Cervidae pending) for his efforts in safely and discreetly carrying these texts across the Jeralls and for restoring our access to the local infrasleeve thought-anchors.

Now that the Society once again has a foothold in the free North, we would like to celebrate the occasion by transmitting the remainder of the aforementioned unpublished Pocket Guide. Be forewarned that transmission will be fractured at best and may contain inaccuracies introduced by unreliable relays. Apart from the host of thalmorite counter-notions that traditionally monitor our channels, the material itself is subject to various cryptocharms installed in the Septim era, often under-maintained beyond repair. We advise confraters to make written copies as sleeve availability is not guaranteed.

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The province of Lleswer and its heterogeneous catmen have always played a relatively minor role in the history of the Septim Empire or its prefigurations. The khajiit have populated Cyrodic folklore since time immemorial. Even in the earliest depictions of nedic tutelary tattoos they are represented as grotesque feline monsters, thought to be in league with -or indistinguishable from- the large cats that stalked the jungles of ancient Cyrod. However, it was not until the year 302 of the interregnum era that the cats first gathered behind the banner of a unified nation. The newly created state began as a precarious union of the Ne Quin-al desert, conquered single-handedly by the battlecat Dro'Sarrba Keirgo, and the vast estates of sugar queen Esjita in the Pallatiin wetlands. Negligent observers have often analyzed the short-lived "monarchy" of Esjita and Keirgo as a megalomaniac fantasy of its incompetent joint-rulers, who to sought to ape the Cyrod Empire in outward appearance rather than function. More important still than ignoring how Remanite Tamriel was falling apart at the time, this interpretation also turns a blind eye to the way in which disparateness had always been a way of life for the catfolk. In reality, the khajiit revolted because the union of Anequina and Pellitine required them to pledge allegiance to an

abstract entity (the khajiit are capable of abstract thought, but on the whole find it dreadfully boring) and demanded of each of them the will to reconcile individual desires with the interests of the state.

Against all expectations, the resulting ethnic turmoils were soon quelled by the spiritual leader of the catmen. In a remarkable display of administrative acumen, the Mane Rid-T'har-ri'Datta based the fledgling nation and its political groundwork on the moons, a diplomatic arrangement that was welcomed by all parties (see sidebar, The Riddle Thar and the birth of Lleswer). Under the urbane guidance of the Manes the country has since known an exceptional prosperity that made it one of the most tranquil, if secretive, of the provinces of the Septim Empire.

Just like the Khajiit, who appear to foreign observers as endless variations on a single feline theme, the geography of Elsweyr is rife with subtle gradients that perhaps only the catfolk itself can properly distinguish. The province has thus entered popular imagination as a boundless stretch of desolate badlands. This sorry reputation is engendered largely by the fact that any cartographic expedition into Khajiit territory requires either meticulous metamundal vectors to travel by brute force, or the rare Imperial disposition to submit to a deep and prolonged sugar trance.

More daring pioneers, however, report a fascinating landscape of silver sands, bathing in a plethora of colors our own atmosphere cannot permit. The north of the province is typified by powder dune seas, interspersed with crystalline mesas that provide homes for those cats who saw nomadic life as crucial to their definition of a perfect state. In the northeast the terrain gradually gives way to the broad gorge of the Niibna Twin, a river which now lies unused. The oases that dot the prairies in the center of the land are rumored to be among the most splendid on the lunar surface and curiously retain the same indigo hue in the bright solar seasons, the fleeting shadow of Jode's monthly passing or the cool slumber of the four month's night. A remarkable phenomenon can be witnessed in these plains on certain blessed nights, when streams of aetheric refuse spontaneously combust in the pale nirnshine to form phantasms instructing the cats in the meanings of stars.

The Riddle Thar and the birth of Lleswer

The Ri'datta-ssabavezi, a khajiiti account of the unification of Lleswer, was sent to White-Gold Tower around 2E 310:

So Mane saw that Khajiit was fighting itself more than usual and donned the hairs of his many littermates and his clan and his guards until he could bear no more and then palanquin-raced throughout the lands to repeat these words: "Woah-ho now, mad cat. You fight and fight but if you will give Mane just one moment, he will show something far better, for the Mane has had many hours and fine sugar to think this over. Come now, Palatiit; come now, Ne Quiniit. Together, just this once, Khajiit will stand tall as Alkosh, cat upon cat upon cat. And in doing so, it will climb to the moon as it has been told so many times."

Khajiit saw reason in these words and so it climbed and climbed, cat upon cat, for a hundred days. Much sugar was brought there to support the climbers and in the end Khajiit climbed high, so very high that it was in fact closer to Jo'Segunda than to Nirni below. At that moment, little Alfiq fell upwards and from there on Khajiit helped Khajiit up, which was down, until all were gathered there. This is where Khajiit intends to stay from now on, for who could know strife when walking sugar and not sand?

Places of Interest

Senchal

Senchal, a bustling metropolis at the tip of the Quin Rall, is the most mundane of Lleswer's cities and the commercial hub of the nation. For lack of a better word, the city's structure can only be described as a heap. To anyone but the nimble khajiit, navigating the heart of Senchal is an unsettling trek across ramshackle bridges and narrow ledges, via ladders and ropes and through dank tunnels, alleys and – more often than not – private residences.

Curiously, where appearances are concerned, Senchal does not live up to its reputation as a port city. Even in seas of their own design, the khajiit are largely adverse to naval enterprises. Instead, traffic between Lleswer and other provinces is primarily managed through the nirstrand terminus at the very tip of the peninsula. Though sugar-fibril transport is an affordable and safe mode of transportation, non-khajiiti incoming passengers are exceptionally scarce. A popular tall tale in countless skooma dens holds that the only sizable band of Imperial visitors to the city was a delegation of diplomats in the early years of Septim Supreme's reign. If this account holds even the smallest kernel of truth, it may well have been this event which provided Talos with the dangerous idea of recolonizing the carmine moon.

Torval

Torval covers one of the largest crater lagoons on Lleswer's southern coast. Extending far into the shallow waters of the bay, the city is the focal point of the khajiiti sugar magics. As the dance of the two moons brings in the tide, slow molasses-like waves deposit sugar of a quality unknown or unknowable to our earth on the beach.

The steep crater walls that cradle Torval on all sides merge into the sacchrinite walls of the Lesser Palace. This enormous edifice, which sits upon the city like a brilliant crown, houses all of the Mane's clan along with a host of servants and courtiers. Central in the Palace is the Mane's private residence, a secluded retreat where he may occasionally dock to shed into a more manageable mortal form and indulge in nourishment or companionship.

The Mane

By ancient tradition, all khajiit would shave off their own manes to tie them into the voluminous crest of their spiritual leader. By the late centuries of the Potentates, this custom had been reduced to a fraction of its original intent as increasing population raised obvious practical problems. After the khajiit had scaled heaven, however, such hindrances fell away and the practice was again extended to all of his two hundred million subjects. In his commonest guise, the Mane is a cilicious sphere of vast dimensions, a third moon among the stars of his Greater Palace. The location of the Satellite Lord changes constantly, orbiting Lleswer along a set but complex and indecipherable trajectory.

The Mane encourages visitors to his sacred self and does not distinguish rank, gender or shape. At any time droves of khajiit, ranging from revered battlecats to modest sugar miners, can be found waiting at Torval's Audience Tower for the first glimpse of him on the horizon. Many of these join the Mane on his journey for a while and watch as he shapes and reshapes the land. The

interior is usually said to be ill-suited to a description in words and varies strongly between accounts. Some guests report a boundless swirl of hair, waving leisurely in pink sucrose vapors like kelp in water. Others recall strange geographies, hallways and inviting furnished rooms, which they never manage to visit more than once. On the Mane's character opinions are undivided: wise beyond time, comforting, beautiful and perfect in any way imaginable.

In the spirit of exhaustive research, an anonymous representative of the Imperial Geographic Society was sent to visit the Mane. The cat lord could only address her in glossobremia, but it remains unclear whether or not this is normally any different for the khajiit. What little could be recorded is reproduced below in a mere few lines, though our informant ensures us that the exchange lasted for many hours. Most of its meaning -if there is any- remains a mystery.

"Welcome. I am such a fine thread you walk the tibrols ripen early this year beware they will not like the book Hatta-Sro' cyrod blood runs thin so soon it will be a healthy boy you know the number Nabarr I am has your queen already given up on try to remember null for a banner she will always think of you even now everywhen farewell."

The Million-Eyed Insect Dreaming: Morrowind

In Niben, the winds limit themselves to commonplace tricks - harassing the unfaithful and confusing travelers - but eastward, beyond the mountains of Cheydenne, the winds begin to change. In this land, they take on new shapes, becoming great black titans and hellions, ravaging the landscape, and bringing constant horror crashing down upon the scarce settlements that barely cling to the damned canyons and mesas. Here the fell winds of morrow bellows out from the flamefrosted ravines of Balúr the red mountain, carrying with them eternal and memorable ashes which roil from within. Stirred from their slumber by the crackling bolt of Lorkhan, these ashes are saturated with the remains of those behemoths who resided here before the coming of the Dragons and the lighting of the Dawn. This strange hellscape is Véloth, the impenetrable valley of ash, which rages against the new lords of Mundus like a ruptured wound on the face of Tamriel.

Despite it all, this was the infernal valley to which the exodus of the Chimer led and where the nations of their descendants, the elusive Dark Elves, still endure against the ruder tyrannies. In the early days of the Elven schisms, their prophet Véloth (who gives his name to the awful country) heard Boethiah's sermon uttered by the duplicitously doubled orifice of the famous Liar-King of Alinor and was moved to heterodox exultations, becoming known in those lands as Vellos, Evangelist to Fools. For his heresy the petty tyrants of the jungle estranged his mouth from his face by cabalistic rituals of blood and laceration. After that the faithful moved east beyond the mountains, following the path that was once burnt across the sky along the arc by which the bloodied heart of the world had fallen. Véloth's followers are devout, and to this day they wander the ashlands, a nomadic people even into modernity.

The Dark Elves are contemplative and rarely speak. They are unfriendly and distrustful of foreigners. Their ancient laws are unbending and their hierarchy is rigid: even petty criminals are punished by exile or death. Few choose exile, and those who do are outsiders in their expatriate homes and never integrate. Though Véloth is a part of the Empire, its people do not seem aware that any such Empire exists or has dominion over them and their nations; certainly they do not recognize it formally, as they have never uttered one word regarding it. When emissaries of the Ruby Throne approach the wise women to treat with them, even as equals, they do not respond but continue with their business in silence, grinding the shalk, harvesting ash, or carving masks and shields out of the chitinous carapace of some monstrous insect. Even still, the Dark Elves are not a seditious folk and have never made rebellion against the Cyrodiils.

Like the dust of moths, Vélothi ash can induce visions when handled with appropriate care. Elven shamans apply a small blot of ash on one or both of their temples, which burns and blisters

their scalp, but also grants them access to the numinous world of dreams and long-dead memories. The ash dreams can take many forms, sometimes creating kaleidoscopic apparitions before the waking eyes, sometimes plummeting the user into a hypnotic realm without right angles. The most intense users of the ash are the mabrigash, Elven women who have crafted an ashface, a mask which they wear as they dream (which is at all times), for the flesh has been seared from their skulls. The mabrigash are consulted regularly by the wise among the Elves, for the ashface speaks truths that no mortal could discern alone. Crucially, the ash has a mind of its own, and the shaman who uses it has no control over what will come to pass, which as often as not is the stuff of twisted nightmares.

Though the Dark Elves augment their visions with ritual scarification and the rhythmic beating of guarskin drums, the dreams are independent spirits from overturned kalpas - and they are not entirely friendly to their Mundane visitors. Ever present are the nix-beasts, which can travel between the waking and un waking worlds and are the devourers of ghosts and spirits; these hideous, writhing vermin seethe with rage and insatiable hunger. For protection, a host of ancestral guides must escort the mabrigash and lesser shamans through the visions. Although their memories are as long as ash, death drains on their identity, and as they ebb into lost time they adopt the image of their living kin such that the cloud of spirits becomes a refraction of their immersant charge. The nix-hounds, which scavenge for food at the incorporeal edges of the Dark Elves' daylight camps, are ruthlessly slaughtered in defense of these ancestors, though nix-handlers have bred some into mighty mounts which they ride in battle and ritual along the twilight margins.

However, there are some among the Dark Elves that do not heed the ash dreams and have betrayed their ancestors. Insanely, they have chosen to forgo nomadism and abandon the Walking Paths in a province incapable of sustaining agriculture. This cultural shift is reflected in their linguistic preference for sedentary architecture: no longer do they organize themselves into 'nations,' but instead into 'houses.' Though the so-called House Elves have always been a small minority in Véloth, the present Empire chooses (unsurprisingly, in light of their shared decadence) to deal with them exclusively. With the sole exception of the Dagoth-Sharmat, they have fallen into the worship of the shapeshifter demon Almsivi. Once mortal, this hermaphroditous monster takes the form of three persons, each a caricature of one of the higher Daedra. The Almsivi first emerged as an dreamborn doppelganger of Sul-Alandro, the shieldbearer to the ancient hortator Nerevar.

In the middle of the first era, the demon chased that saintly pair, known throughout Tamriel for their tragedy, into the heart of Balúr, where the Doom-Drum was lost under a blazing inferno of ash and flame. The murder of Nerevar was quick and without warning (to this day the House Elves mock his memory with a false sainthood; he is depicted among them as a skeleton hung up by the feet). Alandro witnessed this crime, and at the gates of the pit where the greatest leviathan ghosts of the once-dawned reside, the son of clan Sul stood against his double, clad in chitin and ancestors' ash. His thoughts were blasted from his skull by Almsivi, and the things he had witnessed were forever splayed across his chain hood, the Wraithmail. Over time this hood was broken into links, and the links into ringlets, and the ringlets were crafted into piercings, so that now every ashkhan and mabrigash of even the most provincial gathering of netchleather yurts hears the holy whispers of Sul Alandro in their ears.

What occurred then needs no explication, as the geological consequences of the Red Moment are recorded in the annals of all Tamriel's lettered cultures. Traveling through dreamtime, the

demon Almsivi kidnapped and enchained the ancient prophet Véloth. That unspeakable monster put false doubts in his mind and seduced him by stoking these doubts. The voice of Trinimac the Liar-King now instilled fear in him, for it spoke the words of Almsivi, not Boethiah. False apparitions appeared before his eyes, his life became a ceaseless tempest of agony and torment, and, in a moment beyond draconian time, Véloth's soul was shattered. The normally stoic and resolute prophet so convulsed with fury and anguish that he rent the flesh from his throat so that he could scream aloud. In this moment of weakness, Véloth was ensnared by the repulsive tendrils of Almsivi and taken to a dreamscape of malevolent demons that have not walked the earth in ages uncountable.

Where Véloth's jailers hid him was the inner chamber of Lie Rock, a heavy stone wreathed in madness which lies at the heart of Vivec, the greatest city of the House Elves. During the interregnum, the pious mabrigash Bar-Ziah Sul, whose name is Queen Cinders of the clans Sul and Hlathoom, made it her unyielding mission to free Véloth and restore him to his righteousness. For centuries she sought in vain, her sooted face babbling the names of unreal arteries for her betrothed and indentured ashkhans to explore. But there are no apertures in the mundial membrane which lies between our world and Lie Rock, the recondite keystone of deceit, for it is a chasm within chasms. However, in a moment of clarity, as the Cyrodiil armies gathered against broken borders, the wraithwhispers of her ancestor Alandro advised Bar-Ziah to wait at a particular crossing of phantasmal planes across a tangential series of moments.

The ashface of Bar-Ziah Sul has since spoken only of jumbled, distressing woes, so what then occurred would be lost were it not for the register of her nix companion, a million-eyed insect dreaming. Waiting for her at that transdimensional point, the hound records, was an apparition of the Emperor, who greeted her despite her obvious protestation. With the uneasy approval of her ancestors (and consequently all the nomadic nations of the nearer East), Bar-Ziah Sul gave over Véloth to save Véloth, sacrificing history and honor for the one the Dark Elves loved more dearly than them both. With this sorry betrayal Mundus moved in an unseemly manner, Lie Rock was opened to them, and Bar-Ziah and her host stepped into the prison of the prophet to free him at last. But once beyond the gateway they found only golden footprints, impossibly facing east in a world without orients, until at last they dissipated into images of chitin-clad nix-mongrels.

The Great Apes of the Graht: Valenwood

Better is a Better Word: The Lynpan March

If there is one noble thing to have come out of the true Empress' brief reign, it is surely her (somewhat indirect) displacement of the Lynpan March from the land of the Great Apes. Perhaps "noble" is the wrong word; "better" is the better word.

While falconeering in the deeps of Valenwood atop her equine brother and with a train of tree-mimes and vatgrown dwarf-sized versions of other favorite relatives behind her, the hoary monstrosity called King-Dead Wolf-Deer attacked. Perhaps "attacked" is the wrong word; "sought to rejoin them, thinking they were all a vision of his ages-ago Wild Hunt". In any case, the monster's display of brotherhood was frighteningly loud and led to some casualties, including the Court's Royal Vine-Mime, Magpie O'Middlepants, who was trampled to death by the spooked Uriel VI, an uncounted number of unclevuli, and Her Majesty's favorite falcon, Crow.

Soon, the bone-arrows of the feral greensaps pelted everyone present, completely freaked out about the return of King-Dead Wolf-Deer. However, since the Meat Mandated Bosmer really weren't all that hungry, and quite unsure that their stomachs could even house their antediluvial redcapped cousin, they used arrows tiny enough to be more annoyance than fatal, fashioned from robins. All their harrying did was cause more confusion and panic and to bring out the Great Apes, who brought their own rather questionable projectiles to the battle.

At the end, the spirit of Crow the falcon was sent up and out at the Empress' order to summon Kynareth's rains. Morihatha, at this point, was picking out robin-bones from her velvets and tossing away her Imga-leavings-laden wig, all while keeping her brother from galloping out from under her, yelling obscenities that King-Dead Wolf-Deer had not heard since Old Borgas' time. The Maiden of Rains sent a torrential downpour at the Imperial Order. The Lynpan March was washed away entirely, sliding to whereabouts unknown. Hopefully, the Elder Lord of Teeth and Twenty Antlers will trouble us no more, as there were no recorded survivors.



Except for the Empress and her brother, who arrived back to Cyrodiil through a small wind-shift magic that accompanied the rain-wroth divine, and no one said a word to her as she made her way to the Bathhouse of Belharza, her horse snorting in tow. As for Crow the falcon, his sacrifice at Lynpan March was made manifest in kothringilet metals, and his aspect watches over a row of hedge-heads of Green Emperor Road, giving much pride to those living birds that allow their regal-ghosts to parrot some manner of speech.

The Abiding Eye: Argonia

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Although folk tales of silver-skinned Kothringi had been prevalent since the late 1st era, the modern notion arises primarily out of an archeological discovery in 2E865 by Augustus Plongian, who has since been discredited and largely forgotten. Plongian had been excavating Ìitsha, a Kothri village just north of modern-day Soulrest, when he discovered a mass grave, remarkably preserved in the bog. Like all mummies, the bodies were a dark gray color. The high mineral content of the slick, watery ground gave the bodies a glister. Plongian used this as 'evidence' of the Kothringi being silver-skinned in an attempt to preserve the near-mythical significance he had attributed to the tribe. His books, which are now rightly seen as fiction rather than science, painted the Kothringi as a peaceful and educated people, obsessed with astronomy and theology, who brought civilization to the previously savage marsh.

The source of the original myths which fueled Plongian's obsessions have proven harder to track down. Excavations around the Topal Bay have uncovered a remarkable number of silver artifacts attributed to the Kothri, and they are known to be one of the first makers of scale mail (likely inspired by their Argonian neighbors). Of particular interest are the intricate silver masks found in upper class burials - contemporary accounts describe Kothringi nobility as clad in head-to-toe in fine cloth, with only their face showing. It could be that the silver of the mask or the scale armor was mistaken for skin by the historians.

"Silver" could also simply be a mistranslation of the Mesonedic (c. 1E 800-1500) iisirbró, which was used to describe the luster of the moon and carried a distinctive connotation of holiness. Since many Kothringi embraced the Alessian Doctrines, it could be that their whole race was called moon-like and holy in praise.

The Threat of Mirrors: Alinor and the Summering Isles

Those Regions Largely Unwritten

The Republic of Hahd

Hahd is ostensibly an underwater country below the tip of what was once the Dellesian peninsula. Its government is not recognized by any under Imperial authority. As its people, also called Hahd, have made no trouble whatsoever for anyone in history (save once), this same government has never been contested, either. That Hahd is documented here at all is because of the singular time the Republic had an effect on Tamrielic affairs (which also marks the first time any of the known peoples had heard of it), and by some kind and enabling words of a mapmaker.

In the early third era, the Altmeri Keepers of the Orrery of Firsthold suddenly paid tariffs to the Empire on behalf of the Republic of Hahd for "submersible exports of mnemolichite to the Emirates of Nahd". While the Septim Regime was glad to receive the not un-trivial amount of the tariff expense, it did demand to know three things: one, what and where was Hahd, two, what exactly was mnemolichite, and three, what and where was Nahd.

When the Altmer had no answers to any of this, the Ruby Throne grew suspicious and mustered its Armada to make sail. An offended Alinor responded by withdrawing all of its sunbirds from the Pyadonean line to meet the Empire. Just before emissaries from both sides of the imminent battle were about to give up disentangling the mounting myriad of accusations, a book from Hahd arrived by an undisclosed courier to "explain everything whereby these hostilities may cease."

This book was studied by a joint committee of Altmeri and Cyrodilic officials and watched over by an impartial Psijiic of the recently-returned Artaeum. It described the Republic in little detail, only enough to give its supposed location far below the waters of Dellesia. The committee agreed that such a habitat as depicted in the book was impossible (for one, the Hahd described themselves as air-breathers that never needed to break the surface of the sea). This unlikelihood was eventually cemented as an outright falsehood by civilized dreughs living near that region. They had never heard of the Republic of Hahd, and no intellectual of Tamriel ever argued with the cepholomer at that time.

On the separate cases of the Emirates of Nahd and the mineral called mnemolichite, the Republic's explanations for both were the same: they were figments of imagination, a kingdom and a treasure made popular in the Republic by their recurrence in its many fables, underwater campfire stories, and stageplays.

"We are not a very creative folk," the Hahd admitted, "But we always enjoy hearing about the fantastical heroes of sandy Nahd and the wondrous powers of mnemolichite because of the delight that their impossibilities bring to our hearts."

Obviously, what the book failed to properly explain was the impetus for the payment of Firsthold tariffs in the first place. After a fifty-year study of the book and its Republic, the committee went back to analyzing the only thing that might shed light on this matter: the financial logs of Firsthold and those payments sent from the Orrery Keepers to the Imperial Treasury. By this time, however, both the pertinent parties– the Altmeri paymaster and the Cyrodilic Clerk of Tithes Submersible– had long since been replaced, leaving only their records of the by-now bewildering transactions behind. Another fifty-year investigation of these materials ensued. In the end, unraveling anything more about the Republic of Hahd and its mysterious manipulation of Firsthold was deemed futile by both Cyrodiil and Summerset; the surviving members of the joint committee were finally dismissed and sent home in 3E230.

That same year, the Isle of Artaeum disappeared again. Reluctant rescue operations in and about the Blue Divide discovered no survivors of this new version of the phenomenon and no signs of misdeed mundane or magical; all agreed that the Psijics were up to their own tricks again, and the advent of the Mages Guild made this an unworthy endeavor to pursue further. A few days later, however, sailors aboard the NWN frigate Colleen, on its way back to the Iliac to put down more Haymonic insurgency, discovered a book in its dragging nets. It was entitled, "The Dervish of Dellesia and the Mnemolichite Maid." Quite by chance, the captain of the Colleen, Davidius Eel, was a great-nephew of one of the members of the joint committee that had obsessed over the Republic of Hahd for a hundred years.



Captain Eel began to read the manuscript immediately, if only out of a blood-guilt to restore the unsatisfied honor of his ancestor. He was only a few paragraphs in when he realized, to his as-

tonishment, the book's true nature. It was **not**, as its title might suggest, a fable about Nahd from the denizens of Hahd, **but rather a fable about Hahd from some unknown writer of Nahd**. The eponymous dervish was some kind of "air-breathing sea-soldier, formerly of the Republican Guard", who was either protecting or wooing "that maiden to first hold the star-minerals of heaven". Perhaps most troubling was the author ("a humble Nahd of Nahd") and his nearly rote-written preface, which clearly, if uncreatively, indicated that the book was part of a large series or maybe even a shared universe, whose twin anchor points were always the same: an obsession with Hahd and the "powers" of mnemolichite. The latter was never adequately explained in the manuscript, nor has it ever been.

It is the belief of this Survey Agent that any description of the true nature of mnemolichite was as unneeded for the story's intended audience as an explanation of the sun's true nature would be for a citizen of Tamriel. It **was** also the belief of this Survey Agent that the regions of Hahd and Nahd not be written of here at all, since no real answers of their disparate (?) peoples, lands, or cultural make will likely surface, and that that futility is not befitting of our society. It is to my great friend and colleague, Senior Cartographer Rinmout, that I dedicate this lengthy passage to him and his words of convincing, "Those places that cannot be mapped, they should never cry avast to our pens to stop and try."

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